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James E. Lewisohn Correspondence

James E. Lewisohn

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JAMES E. LEWISOHN, Maine State Prison

Part I August 1974 - August 1976

I. Educational activities

1. Taught pre-GED class 5 days a week August 1974 to May 1976
2. Continually tested inmates (GATE, TABE, Literacy Volunteers READ Test)
3. Typed stencils and kept records in Education Office
4. Taught first college-credit course (English I, under UM Augusta) at the prison, spring semester 1976
5. Worked with individual inmate writers, of whom four who had never written before, R. David Colby, Patrick Donovan, Richard Freeman, and Richard Leete, were published for the first time, from prison
6. Coordinator for Poetry Workshop (English II Imaginative Writing - UM Augusta as a project of the Maine Arts and Humanities Commission, plus a fine anthology of inmate and staff poetry being published by the Prison Print Shop plus college credit for 9 of the 16 students
7. Maintained my rank of Associate Professor at UM Augusta, thanks to the help of people here at the prison
8. Will teach SURVIVAL, a college-credit course in English (Modern Literature) for UM Augusta at the prison during fall semester 1976

II. Publications

Books:

1. R O S L Y N, a book of my poems, dedicated to my wife 1975 Casco Press
2. G O L G O T H A: Letters from Prison (poems) 1976 Greenfield Review Press

Articles:

1. "The only faith is the faith of confrontation." The Church World July 22, 1976

Poems:

1. Northern New England Review "Mao-Tse-Tung," "For David" Sept. 1974
2. New York Quarterly "For My Wife 1936-1974" winter 1975
3. UM Portland-Gorham Presumpscot "Going Home," "Roslyn," "There is no weather here" fall 1975
4. The New Yorker "December Day" December 8, 1975
5. Longhouse Magazine "Prisoner," "For My Daughter," "Dark Night," "Prison Night" April 1976
6. Greenfield Review "The Last One" fall 1975 "The Crime of Punishment," "Letter to Anne Sexton," "Surely, This Is Odysseus," "Poem for Margaret" spring 1976
7. Traveling America, an anthology Macmillan Publishers "Gulls," "Mount Washington" 1976
8. Choice #10 John Logan, editor 1976-77 poem
9. America (Jesuit Journal) "On the Death of a Friend's Child" 1976
10. Corrections Magazine (for all people in Corrections in the U.S.) "Prison Motto" March 1976
11. American Poetry Review "Prison Motto," "Magician," "After" Mar/Apr 1976

12. The Church World (Maine Catholic Weekly) frequ poems 1975 and 1976
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|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| "Testimony" | "Poem for John Logan" | "For David Hasson" |
| "Two Lights" | "A dark night" | "As Abraham before the Angels" |
| "Sad Hyacinth" | "In One Small Hour" | "After Cries and Whispers" |
| "Roslyn" | "Jacob and the Angel" | "For committees meetings" |
| "The Sea" | "Lock-Up 4 PM" | "Communion in a prison cell" |
| "The Mass" | "On Reading Rilke" | "The Passion from a prison cell" |
| "Our Parents" | "Poem for Peter" | "Morning" |
| "Martin Luther King and All the Sages" | | |

III. Ready for publication

1. Selected Poems by James Lewisohn (book)
2. A Volume of Correspondence with Dr. Wittenberg (a full-length book)
3. one short article on punishment

IV. Editorial work

1. Light at the End of the Tunnel, James Lewisohn, editor an anthology of inmate and staff poetry, Maine State Prison August 1976

V. Miscellaneous writing

1. two detailed notebooks
2. steady correspondence with many people in various fields

VI. Written by others about James Lewisohn and his published writing

1. Coda: Poets and Writers Newsletter
 article about Lewisohn May 1975
 "Poets Stand Up for Impressive Fellow-Poet, James Lewisohn" Feb/Mar 1976
 article about Lewisohn by Israel Shenker, feature writer for New York Times early fall 1976
2. The Church World
 a two-installment review of R O S L Y N 1975
 two fan letters from readers 1975 and March 1976
3. Portland Press Herald feature article about Lewisohn by Ted Cohen Dec. 15, 1975
4. UMPG Presumpscot Review of R O S L Y N 1976
5. American Poetry Review Review of R O S L Y N by Joseph Bruchac Mar/Apr 1976
6. Courier-Gazette, Rockland, Maine Review of G O L G O T H A: Letters from Prison July 22, 1976
7. Times Record, Brunswick, Maine "Poetry from a prison's microcosm," an interview article on the Poetry Workshop and G O L G O T H A July 8, 1976
8. Bridgton News, Bridgton, Maine "Lewisohn: A Candle Held Against the Darkness" July 15, 1976
9. Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Illinois review of G O L G O T H A early fall 1976
10. New York Times article on interview by Israel Shenker, feature writer assigned by Tom Wicker, Associate Editor early fall 1976

VII. Special Award

1. One of 10 Awards for Prison Poetry in the Nation, given by P.E.N., for Lewisohn's poem "Lifers" 1975

VIII. Miscellaneous

1. Coda sponsorship of Petition for James Lewisohn, signed by poets and writers:

Henry Braun	Galway Kinnell	Joel Oppenheimer
Joseph Bruchac	Maxine Kumin	Bill Packard
Hayden Carruth	Stanley Kunitz	May Sarton
John Ciardi	Denise Levertov	Gary Snyder
Leo Connellan	John Logan	William Styron
J. V. Cunningham	William Meredith	Richard Wilbur
Allen Ginsberg	Howard Moss	
Daniel Hoffman	Howard Nemerov	

Signed also by entire staff of The American Poetry Review:

Stephen Berg	Maxwell Gordon	J. D. McClatchy
Rhoda Schwartz	Cynthia Evans	Frances McCullough
David Binanno	Dick Allen	Ralph J. Mills, Jr.
Arthur Vogelsang	Richard Balkin	Nicano Parra
Eleanor Wilner	Michael Benedikt	Steven Polgar
William Arrowsmith	Robert Coles	Alvin Rosenfeld
David Ignatow	Robert Dana	Eric Sackheim
A. Poulin, Jr.	Richard Hugo	Armand Schwerner
Jeff Moran	June Jordan	Ava Seave
C.C. Mansfield & Assoc.	Gail Lynch	C. K. Williams
John Brubaker	S. J. Marks	Paul Zweig
Vernon White	Jerome Mazzaro	

2. Fan mail about publications from Maine and many other states

Part II August 1976 - August 1977

I. Educational activities

1. Completed clerical work, testing, and teaching pre-GED classes for the Prison Education Department Office in mid-December 1976
2. Became Assistant to Fr. Benedict Reilly, S.J., Prison Chaplain, in his office in mid-December 1976 and have continued as such
3. Taught three 3-credit courses for University of Maine at Augusta (UMA)
 - Modern Literature I first semester
 - Modern Literature II second semester
 - English I: Freshman Writing second semester
4. Was Coordinator for Poetry Workshops offering 3 credit hours for UMA:
 - Poetry Workshop during academic year 1976-77 with Donald Junkins and Fr. Daniel Berrigan as Poet-Lecturers for one session each with funds saved from Maine Arts and Humanities grant
 - Poetry Workshop (16 inmate student-poets) under \$3,000 grant from CULTURE, a special project of American Correctional Association for 15 weeks starting July 1977 and taught by visiting writers Joseph Bruchac, Jim Bishop, Gary Lawless, Henry Braun, Denise Lev-ertov, and others, with 3 sessions taught by James Lewisohn. Grant also provides for publication of a Workshop Anthology in the fall.
5. Prepared for teaching two 3-credit courses for UM Augusta at the prison during fall semester starting in September.¹⁹⁷⁷ This will be the fourth semester of teaching college courses within the walls.

II. Publications

Books:

1. Light at the End of the Tunnel (Workshop Anthology) edited by James Lewisohn 1,000 copies distributed widely
2. Out of the Depths (Workshop Anthology) edited by James Lewisohn and Editorial Assistant Don Howland published by private funds First printing of 500 copies depleted in 3 months Second printing of 500 copies appearing in August 1977
3. Lead Us Forth from Prison (poems) by James Lewisohn Greenfield Press, Greenfield Center, N.Y., August 1977

Poems:

1. The Church World (Maine Catholic Weekly)

"Morning"	"The Pharisee"
"Operation"	"Each Time a Man Travels"
"The Messiah"	"Mt. Washington"
"The Wireless"	"The Pen"
"September"	"Going Home"
"Marigolds"	"Prisoner"
"Names"	"Transfiguration"
"The Old"	"Martin Luther King"
"Names: After Black and White Rabbi by Chagall"	
"Martin Luther King and All the Sages"	
2. The Pushcart Prize, II: Best of the Small Presses "Theodore Roethke (a little memory)"

Column:

1. Stony Hills: The New England Alternative Press Review the first column for Maine State Prison, by James Lewisohn, starting June 1977

III. To be published within the next year

1. A third Workshop Anthology edited by James Lewisohn
2. Selected Poems by James Lewisohn, edited by Donald Junkins for publication by the University of Massachusetts Press

IV. Editorial work (in addition to published anthologies)

1. Contributing Editor, The COSMEP Prison Project Newsletter (COSMEP: Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers) "Poetry Workshop at Maine State Prison, News Release" fall 1976
2. Edited 4 poems by 4 poets in the MSP Poetry Workshops and published in Zahir 9, national magazine published by Diane Kruckow
3. Edited book of poems by Elmer Hutchins, member of MSP Poetry Workshops, and first student inmate poet to publish his own book, published by Greenfield Press, Greenfield Center, N.Y., August 1977
4. Edited 2 more books of poetry by individual inmate poets in MSP Poetry Workshops, awaiting publishers

V. Miscellaneous writing

1. Steady correspondence with many people in various fields
2. Several religious meditations and Corrections articles

VI. Written by others about James Lewisohn and his published writing

1. COSMEP Prison Project Newsletter c/o The Greenfield Review, Greenfield Center, N.Y., fall 1976 Review of Light at the End of the Tunnel by Joseph Bruchac
2. Chicago Daily News Review of Golgotha: Letters from Prison by G. E. Murray August 28, 1976
3. New York Sunday Times Article on Lewisohn Sept. 19, 1976
4. Portland Sunday Telegram Article on Lewisohn Sept. 19, 1976
5. Bangor Daily News Review of Light at the End of the Tunnel by Marion Flood French Oct. 16-17, 1976
6. Kennebec Journal, Augusta, Maine Review of Light at the End of the Tunnel by Susan Caldon October 1976
7. Reviews of Light at the End of the Tunnel across the country
8. Commutation letters written by 15 9th graders at the Minuteman Regional Vocational High School, Lexington, Massachusetts fall 1976
9. The Church World Review of Golgotha: Letters from Prison by Thomas P. McDonnell March 3, 1977
10. The Courier Gazette, Rockland, Maine Review of Out of the Depths by Catharine Cates June 9, 1977
11. Portland Press Herald articles on Lewisohn's appearance before Legislature's Health and Institutional Services Committee April 13 and 22, 1977
12. Biddeford Journal Article on Lewisohn "Prison inmate speaks on criminal code" April 13, 1977

13. Bangor Daily News Article on Lewisohn "Lifer testifies" April 13, 1977

VII. Special awards and honors

1. Selection of "Theodore Roethke (a little memory)" for inclusion in The Pushcart Prize II: Best of Small Presses, Pushcart Press, Yonkers, N.Y., 1977, national award anthology of prose and poetry from published books during preceding year Nominated by Leonard Randolph, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, from Golgotha: Letters from Prison One of 40 poems chosen from over 3500 nominations
2. Chosen by MSP inmates to represent them at the Hearing on the criminal code in Augusta, April 13 and 22, 1977

VIII. Miscellaneous

1. Television on-the-spot news story of Modern Literature course given by James Lewisohn at Maine State Prison, for release by NEWSWEEK Broadcasting Service across the U.S. and shown in many places including Massachusetts and Washington, D.C. October 1976
2. Interview with Stephen Gittinger, Editor of Corrections, a national magazine Subject: The New Criminal Code fall 1976
3. Taped radio interview for WSOH, Maine Broadcasting System Subject: Capital Punishment fall 1976
4. Spoke on the Criminal Code and Conjugal Visits before Maine's Legislature's Health and Institutional Services Committee, April 13 and 22, 1977, representing the MSP inmates

IX. Personal information

1. On June 24, 1977, married in the Roman Catholic Church to Glennis Merriman, a college graduate, nurse, and "a miracle of goodness"